

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-09 DODE-00
DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 SOE-02 DOE-15 FMC-01 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5875

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 4790

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PLOS, EFIS, DR, RQ
SUB: US-DR MARITIME BOUNDARY/FISHERIES NEGOTIATION

1. AS GUZMAN GOVERNMENT SETTLES IN, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BEGIN READDRESSING OURSELVES TO MARITIME BOUNDARIES/FISHERIES QUESTION WITH THE NEW AUTHORITIES. THE DOMINICANS HAVE, ON BALANCE, SHOWN THE RESTRAINT THEY PROMISED SINCE OUR TALKS ENDED LAST NOVEMBER, HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN INCIDENTS AND THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICAN ACCESS TO DOMINICAN FISHERIES IS A SENSITIVE ONE IN BOTH THE PRESS HERE AND IN PUERTO RICO.
2. FOREIGN SECRETARY JIMENEZ, WHO PARTICIPATED BRIEFLY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON BOUNDARIES/FISHERIES LAST NOVEMBER, PROVIDES SOME CONTINUITY ON THE DOMINICAN SIDE. RECENT APPOINTEES AT THE SECOND-LEVEL OF FOREIGN SECRETARIAT AND OTHERS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT ARE GENERALLY AWARE OF THE ISSUE AND APPEAR RECEPTIVE. HOWEVER, THEY WILL NEED SOME BRIEFINGS AND TIME FOR FAMILIARIZATION.
3. WE STILL REMAIN WITHOUT A DEFINITE INDICATION OF THE PUERTO RICAN POSITION, DESPITE REPEATED EFFORTS TO CLARIFY GOVERNOR ROMERO BARCELO'S ATTITUDE (SANTO DOMINGO 3273, AND STATE 109922). ALTHOUGH
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WE WERE LED TO EXPECT PUERTO RICAN CONFIRMATION EARLY THIS SUMMER OF THE POLITICAL ACCEPTABILITY OF OUR PROPOSED COMPROMISE OFFER TO THE GODR, WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING TO DATE. WHEN GOVERNOR ROMERO WAS HERE AUGUST 15-17 FOR THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT GUZMAN, HE AGAIN AVOIDED DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM WHEN AMBASSADOR RAISED IT WITH HIM. THE LACK OF REACTION BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT WITH WHOM WE

HAVE RAISED MATTER OVER PAST MONTHS MAY INDICATE THAT THEY ALSO ARE AWAITING A DECISION BY THE GOVERNOR WHICH HE THUS FAR HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO MAKE.

4. A SIDE ISSUED INTRODUCED BY PUERTO RICAN SECRETARY OF STATE REINALDO PANIAGUA DIEZ ALSO REMAINS UNSETTLED (SANTO DOMINGO 0832). WHAT PUERTO RICAN AUTHORITIES BASICALLY WANT, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, IS ASSURANCE THAT ANY MARITIME BOUNDARIES AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BE USED BY THE USG TO INHIBIT CONSIDERATION OF A MONA CHANNEL SITE (PRESUMABLY DESECHEO ISLAND) AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR US NAVAL TARGET FACILITIES ON VIEQUES ISLAND. PANIAGUA REPEATED THIS CONCERN ORALLY AND IN GENERAL TERMS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY DURING HIS RECENT STOP IN SAN JUAN ON RETURN TRIP FROM BOGOTA AND TO AMBASSADOR YOST AGAIN DURING PANIAGUA'S VISIT TO SANTO DOMINGO FOR GUZMAN INAUGURATION. HOWEVER, THE AMBASSADOR'S EFFORTS IN JUNE TO EXTRACT A SPECIFIC, ALLY WORDED STATEMENT OF PUERTO RICAN DESIDERATA HAVE PRODUCED NO RESULTS.

5. ONE IS LEFT WITH THE CONCLUSION AT THIS POINT THAT WE ARE BEING GIVEN SOMETHING OF A RUN-AROUND, WITH ROMERO AND PANIAGUA FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO FACE THE POLITICAL DECISION OF PUTTING ON THE RECORD SPECIFIC WORDING WITH REGARD TO EITHER ISSUE IN THE ABSENCE OF A DEADLINE FOR RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. WE ARE, HOWEVER, PREPARED TO MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT WITH SAN JUAN IF DEPARTMENT BELIEVES IT USEFUL. ONE ALTERNATIVE
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WOULD BE FOR EMBOFF, SPECIFICALLY DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION TULL, TO TRAVEL TO SAN JUAN TO MAKE FINAL EFFORT TO GET (A) A CLEAR COMMITMENT FROM ROMERO THAT HE CAN PUBLICLY SUPPORT THE AGREEMENTS TO BE NEGOTIATED ALONG LINES NOW PROPOSED, AND (B) A SPECIFIC STATEMENT FROM PANIAGUA OF THE WORDING THEY SEEK ON THE ISSUE ABOUT WHICH HE IS CONCERNED.

6. AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH WOULD BE TO AVOID RAISING THESE ISSUES AGAIN WITH THE PUERTO RICANS IN THE ABSTRACT AND, AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO INFORM THEM THAT WE PROPOSE TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GODR LOOKING TOWARD RESUMPTION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. BECAUSE THE PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT IS REPRESENTED ON THE US NEGOTIATING SIDE, THIS APPROACH WOULD ELICIT SPECIFIC POSITIONS DURING THE PREPARATORY PROCESS. WE SUSPECT THIS MAY BE THE WAY WE WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO GO BUT BELIEVE ONE MORE EFFORT TO CLARIFY BOTH QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE SHOULD BE MADE IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE ANY VULNERABILITY TO LATER PROBLEMS.

7. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT EMBASSY SHOULD BE THE ONE TO MAKE THIS APPROACH, WE WOULD PROPOSE CABLING THE GOVERNOR FROM THE AMBASSADOR AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: REGRET TIME DID NOT PERMIT US, WHEN YOU WERE
IN SANTO DIMINGO AUGUST 15-17, TO DISCUSS FURTHER THE QUESTION
OF RESUMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GODR ON THE QUESTIONS OF
MARITIME BOUNDARIES AND THE CONTINUED ACCESS OF THE PUERTO
RICAN FISHING INDUSTRY TO FISHERIES LOCATED WITHIN THE DOMINICAN
EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (ZEE).

INASMUCH AS IT IS IN OUR COMMON INTEREST TO RENEW THESE
NEGOTIATIONS AT AN EARLY TIME, I WOULD PROPOSE ASKING MY DEPUTY,
JAMES L. TULL, TO GO TO SAN JUAN TO MEET WITH YOU, AND PERHAPS
OTHERS IN YOUR ADMINISTRATION CONCERNED WITH THIS MATTER, TO
ENSURE YOUR FIRM POSITION ON THE NEGOTIATIONS ALONG LINES I
DISCUSSED WITH YOU AND YOUR STAFF DURING MY VISIT TO PUERTO
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RICO LAST JUNE. HE WILL ALSO WANT TO BE SURE THAT WE HAVE AN
ABSOLUTELY CLEAR, MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE RAISED
SEPARATELY BY THE HONORABLE REINALDO PANIAGUA, SECRETARY OF
STATE, WITH AMBASSADOR HURWITCH LAST FEBRUARY AND MORE RECENTLY
WITH AMBASSADOR VAKY AND MYSELF. WE WOULD LIKE TO ARRANGE AN
APPOINTMENT WITH YOU AS SOON AS IT IS CONVENIENT AND WILL AWAIT
YOUR WORD.

IT WAS INDEED GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN DURING YOUR RECENT
VISIT HERE. WARM REGARDS. UNQUOTE.

9. IN LIGHT OF OTHER CURRENT ACTIVITIES WITH REGARD TO PUERTO
RICO, WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON ABOVE.
YOST

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